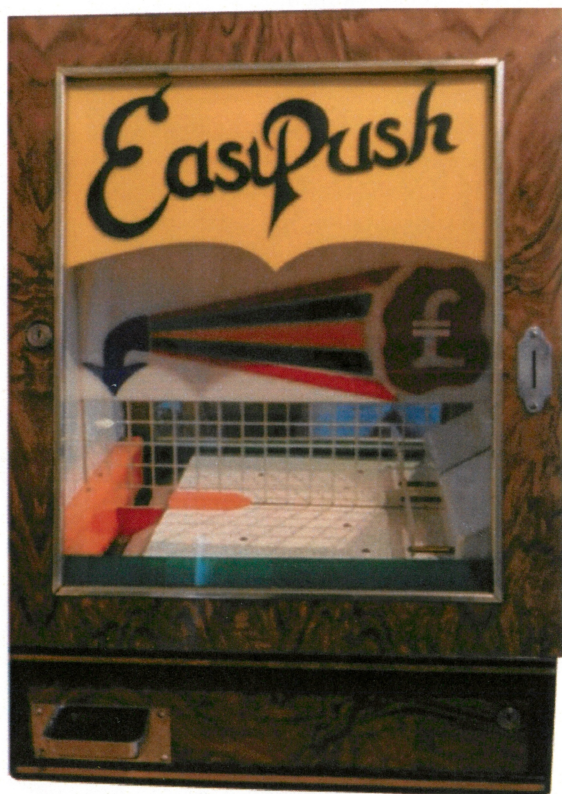


MECHANICAL MEMORIES MAGAZINE

ISSUE 81

DEC. 2013



*The only UK magazine dedicated to
Vintage coin-operated amusement machines*

Mechanical Memories Magazine

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Editorial

Hello, and here we are at last with the December magazine, which of course will be the final issue this year. Now would be a good opportunity to have a mega moan about what a rubbish year this has been, but as I've made a concerted effort all year to keep my moaning to a minimum (particularly on the subject of Brighton), I shall refrain. It is also the season of good will to all (including the loony green twats that run Brighton council). So let's just hope that 2014 will be a better year for us all.

Best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a very happy and prosperous New Year.

Jerry

Front Cover picture: Jamiesons Easy Push, Lot 150 in the Coventry Auction last month, which sold for a record £575!

Dreamland

MARGATE

Save Dreamland Update December 2013

2,300 PEOPLE ATTEND DREAMLAND OPEN GATE EVENT

At mid-day on 16 November 2013 Dreamland Trust chairman Nick Laister cut the ribbon and allowed the public to take back Dreamland at a special open gate event. During the day we welcomed over 2,300 lovely people to the Dreamland site in just three hours! Plus a large contingent of classic and vintage vehicle enthusiasts gathered in the events area to show their support for Dreamland. Everyone was allowed to walk underneath the Scenic Railway and into the heart of Dreamland, areas that have not been open to the public for seven years.

Visitors could meet the Dreamland Trust team and sign up as volunteers. They could have their photo taken sitting on Whip cars from Blackpool, plant a seed for Dreamland, view the plans and see models of Dreamland from the 1960s. There was music, vintage clothing, pantomime characters and live music. Souvenir newspapers were on sale for £1, providing information on the history of Dreamland and the rides that will form Phase 1 of the project.

In the evening, a special auction was held, selling artwork donated by well-known people such as Tracey Emin and Vic Reeves. Numerous celebrities were in attendance in the evening, including Brenda Blethyn, Vic Reeves, Nancy Sorrell, Janet Street-Porter, John Challis and others. The Dreamland Trust's creative designer Wayne Hemingway gave an opening talk before handing over to TV auctioneer Mark Stacey. This was followed by a party at Morgans, Margate's new vintage dance hall. In all, an estimated £25,000 (less costs) was raised towards the Dreamland Visitor and Learning Centre, which will open next spring.

A big thank you goes to everyone who contributed toward the events. Both events were a tremendous success and would not have happened without the enthusiasm and generosity of our partners, contributors, sponsors, supporters and volunteers – Dreamland is firmly on the map and we are full steam ahead for a 2015 opening!

Generally traders in the old town reported a busier than usual mid-November Saturday and businesses along the seafront, toward the station, also benefited from the extra footfall the Dreamland events created.

At the Open Day, hundreds of people potted plants, took them home to nurture, and will return in 2014 to plant a garden for Dreamland. We registered around 160 volunteers and linked approximately 80 people to the Dreamland archive resulting in offers of photographs and recorded personal memories and histories. We also collected thousands of peoples' memories and thoughts on the comment board and luggage tags and have signed up volunteers for the f community engagement event, The Big Clear Day, which was held on the 30 November 2013. This event was also a great success and I will report on that in the next issue of Mechanical Memories.

Once again, a big thank you to everyone who made Saturday's Open Day and Art Auction such memorable events.

VOLUNTEERING UP-DATE

Thank you to everyone offering to help rebuild Dreamland – as stated above, we now have approximately 160 volunteers signed up! Our voluntary Volunteer Coordinator, John Cripps, is currently up-dating the volunteer register. This involves matching people's skills, interests and available time to the project programme, physical works schedule, specific tasks, activities and events – lots to co-ordinate! John helps us just one day a week and is doing a sterling job replying to the many emails and signatures received and will be contacting everyone as soon as possible. Please be patient – we are getting there!

We do have to manage numbers of people coming to the site for health and safety reasons. So if you miss any one event, don't worry, there will be more opportunities in the New Year.

Nick Laister

Nick Laister (Chairman, The Dreamland Trust)

Jan Leandro (Heritage and Engagement Officer, The Dreamland Trust)

www.dreamlandmargate.com

www.savedreamland.co.uk

Southend Past: The Town Our Parents Knew DVD

Take a journey back in time to visit Southend as it used to be. From German air raids to holidays on the beach, see the bygone years come back to life, including: The visit of the Royal Navy in 1909; scenes of town life from the 1900s to the 1960s; holidays by the pier; Ecko electronics factory and Southend Airport in the 1960s.

The back cover features a large photograph of the Cyclone roller coaster at the Kursaal Amusement Park.

Classification: Exempt from classification

Region coding: Not region coded

Running Time: 55 minutes

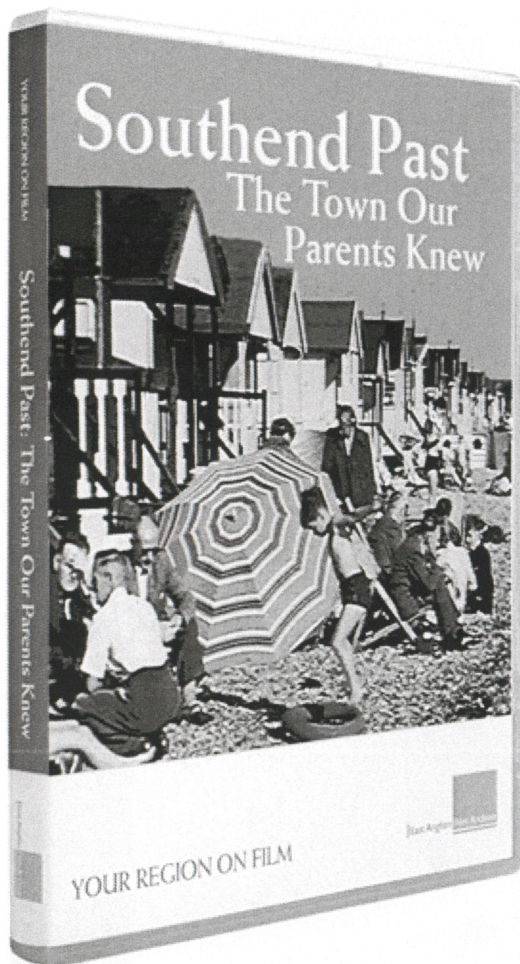
Label: Timereel Studios

RRP: ~~£12.99~~

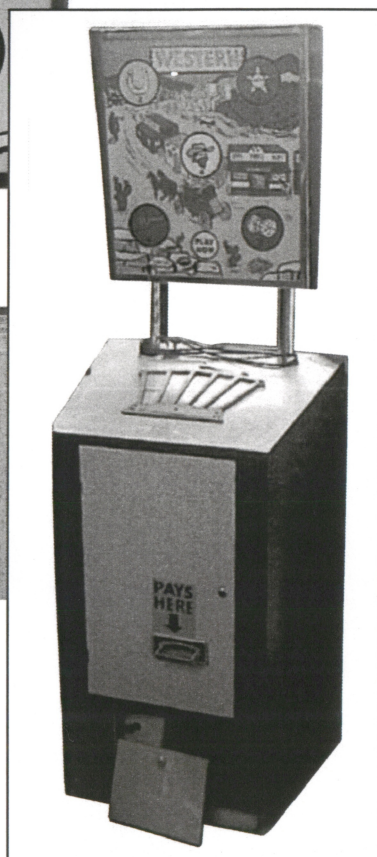
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Samson Western

By Robert Rowland

One day back in July, I had a quick glance at the pennymachines website. I always visit this site most days, if only to find out what problems other collectors like me are getting with their machines. On this particular occasion, I spotted a thread on the forum that interested me; it read "I've stuck all my machines I have available on the auction."

So upon clicking on the auction page, I saw pictures of one of the machines which was of interest to me. This slot machine ticked all the right boxes for me:

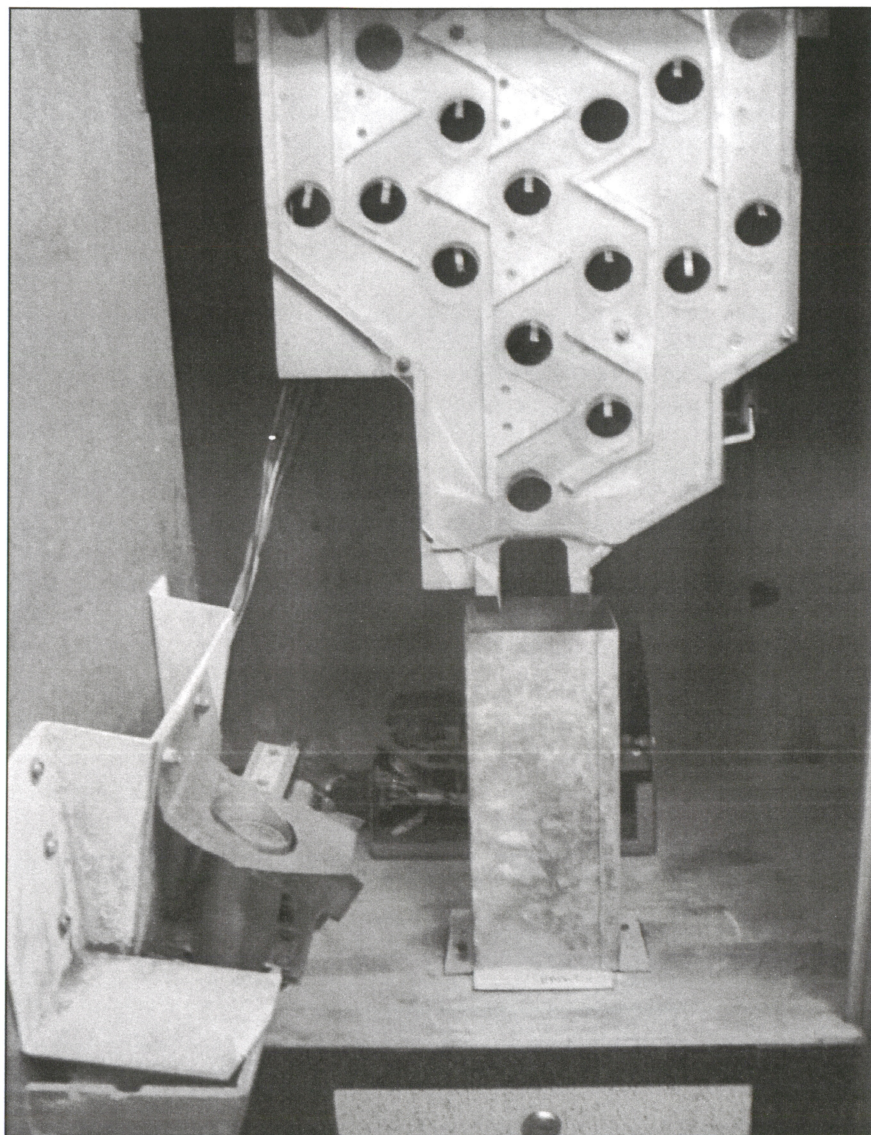
- 1) I remember seeing one of these back in the 1960s.
- 2) It was electro-mechanical.
- 3) It had fun play appeal.
- 4) It was made in the 1960s.
- 5) It was a reasonable price.
- 6) It was a reasonable distance pick-up.

There was also a 'Buy it Now' option for £150. With this situation, I made a quick decision – I instantly clicked on Buy it Now. Now to start worrying about fetching it. I contacted the seller, who luckily for me offered to deliver it within a couple of days for £70, which was cheaper than me having to hire a van. Why? Because this machine is over six feet tall and only just fits through a standard door!

The slot in question was made by Samson in the 1960s and is called **Western**. The large plastic topflash, which measures almost two feet square, depicts what I would describe as a colourful realistic scene from the American Wild West, c. 1890. We see a stagecoach and horses, a bank, a jail, a saloon bar, a store, as well as a signpost for Boot Hill. Blending in with this scene are five circled flashing symbols, which flash on and off in constant attract mode, only stopping when a coin is inserted.

The symbols are Horseshoe (yellow) paying 2d; Sheriff badge (red) paying 4d; gun (blue) paying 6d; outlaw (white) paying 4d and lucky dice (green) paying 2d. Lower down is the coin entry panel with five slots, where you can place your bet on one or more of the five flashing symbols.

Once you insert a coin in any particular slot, a coloured light comes on to show where you have placed your bet. There is no 'lose' visible, but every now and then the game ends with nothing lit and all place bet coins are lost. I feel sure that this is meant to happen, because if you watch the five flashing symbols when in attract mode, there is never a time when a lose gap appears. It keeps flashing until a coin is inserted, which then results in the moving selector stopping on a random position. Also, with no 'Lose' I feel the Western would have been too generous.



*The very clever payout system – no uniselector; no relays,
just a large coin chute casting and a few micro switches – simple!*

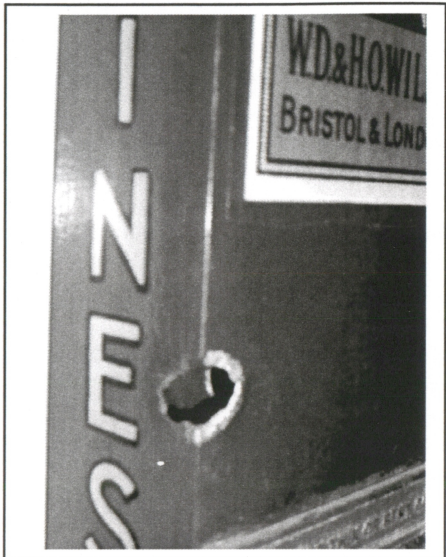
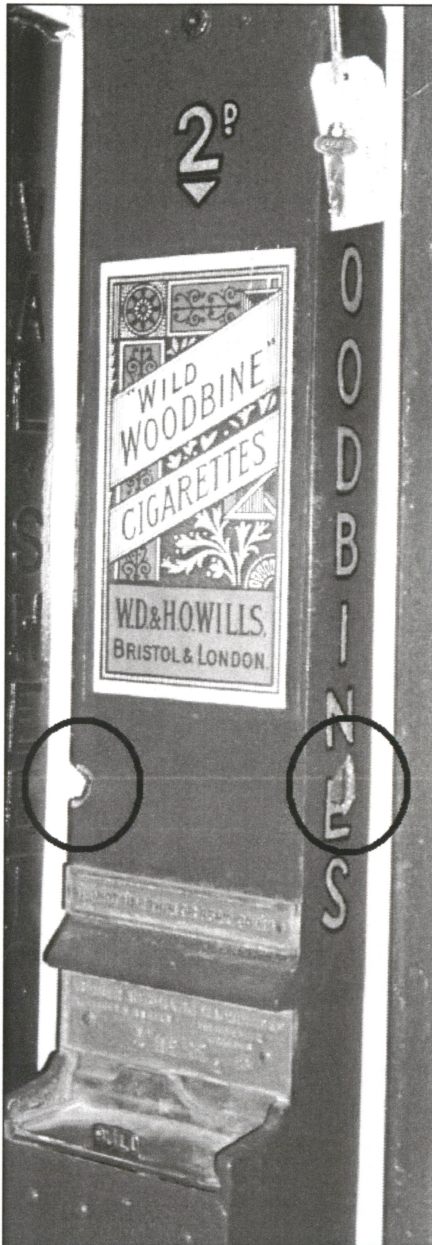
Funnily enough, for such a large machine, the inside workings are scant. The whole system revolves around one square box compartment, which includes a thirty-position selector unit. The payout system is very clever, and merely uses the bet coins to determine the amount paid out. All coins bet are held captive by a bar at the top of the five coin chutes. When the game ends, the bar releases the pennies, allowing them to drop past a number of micro switches on their decent to the payout tube, and thus activating the payout solenoid each time the winning penny passes a switch. The number of micro switches for each coin chute corresponds to 2d, 4d or 6d wins.

I last saw one of these Western machines at Skegness back in 1968. Decimalisation in 1971 would probably have killed-off most of these machines, as it would not have been viable to convert the payout system to the new, much smaller 1p coins. I have been told by another collector that it is possible that my Western machine could be the only working example left in the UK, although if you know otherwise, please let me know.

Am I pleased with my Samson Western? Yes. I know it would not be to everyone's taste simply because of its size, but I am as happy as Larry to have got hold of this machine. By the time this article is published, you may already have seen my Western video on Youtube. For those that haven't, search '*Western 1960s penny arcade slot machine*' and see for yourself.

I had to be quick on the draw to get this dude, and yes, I am the Marshall of this here town.....and I love my 1960s Samson Western.

Robert Rowland



The Machine with the Hole

(with apologies to Polo)

By Stuart Searle

Vending machines also come under the catalogue of coin-op, and come in all shapes, sizes and materials, and vend a wide variety of products. Many people will remember (if you are of a certain age) the Beechnut machines in the 1960s, vending a small pack of chewing gum for one penny. You used to get a free pack with every fourth turn. The thing to look for was an arrow on the round knob at the side, which you would turn to get your gum. When the arrow was pointing to the front, that was the time for your free packet. Passing my local machine at least four times a day, the chances are you would get your extra pack!

The machine with the hole, which vends a very common product of the time, is an uncommon make (The Turner Automat Machines Ltd of Manchester) and has an unusual story. The period is the Second World War and the place was Cardiff railway station. Most people have experienced in their time a problem with vending machines not vending their product and ending up thumping or kicking it. However, the frustrated WWII Canadian soldier gasping for a smoke and losing his two pence, unshouldered his rifle and shot it!!

As can be seen from the photos, the bullet entered from lower left, went through the pack rack and out of the case the other side, slightly higher. Obviously this was not appreciated by the authorities and he was duly arrested, and along with the machine being removed from the wall as evidence, carted off to the local police station.

Unfortunately, what offence the soldier was charged with seems to be lost in time, but the machine was stored in the police station's cellar from this time until cleared out 8 or 9 years ago, and then turned up at Beaulieu Autojumble.

It was in a bit of a state when I acquired it, so some restoration was needed, but even though the wind blows through the holes it still works! It's always a good story when people ask what the holes are for. So next time you need that nicotine fix, remember the gasping soldier, reach for the patch and leave any guns locked in the cupboard!

Stuart Searle

Coventry 2013

So, another auction over, and I think we would all agree that it was another great day. The weekend got off to its usual start with a good number of us meeting up on the Saturday evening for a most enjoyable meal and a few beers to follow (I have to confess that some of us had a few more beers than others – I must remember to get an early night next year)!

On the morning of sale, I awoke bright and early (well, early at least) and off we set for the venue. The only major problem of the day was getting out of the multi-story car park. Kevin went through the exit first, and I followed.....but not very far. Having poked my ticket in the slot to raise the barrier, I then drove off only to come to a grinding halt accompanied by a God-almighty crash. After disentangling my van roof rack from the (now) mangled exit roller shutter, we tried pushing the shutter up further, as it still had a couple of inches to go. It wasn't going to budge, and I was beginning to think that I wasn't going to get out! Anyway, to cut a long story short, I eventually managed to get out via the adjacent exit whose shutter was slightly higher.

That aside, the day continued without any hitches.....and what a day it turned out to be! We certainly broke a few records, not least with attendance, as I think this was our busiest auction ever. As an added bonus, it appears we've finally got the message across that viewing commences at 10.30, as there wasn't the usual congregation of slotties waiting to get in at 7.00 a.m.! In fact, when we did start admitting people, I was a little concerned that no one was going to show up. However, my fears were unfounded and by mid day the room was heaving.



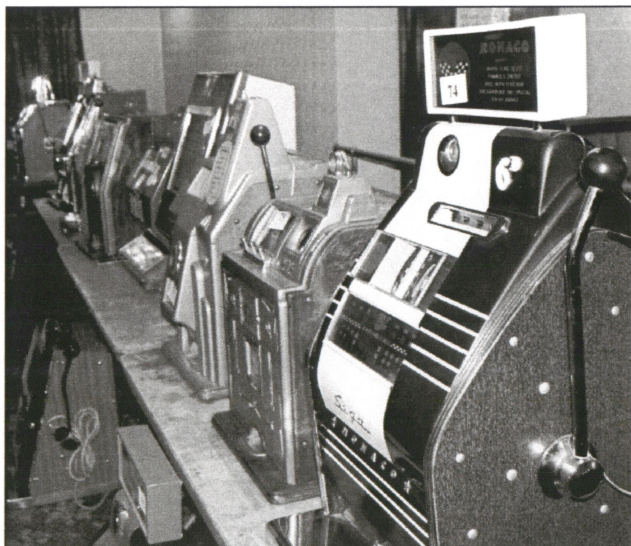
Bidding got off to a good start, with the first block of wall machines (lots 17 – 27) all selling easily and for good prices. That basically set the trend for the day, with very few machines not selling. Wall machines did particularly well, with many achieving record prices, which I think reflected the quality of lots in general. However, there is definitely a less encouraging trend with bandits, which in general don't seem to be commanding the prices they ought. Although most of the bandits on offer this year sold, prices overall were a little disappointing.

Other lots such as books and coins all sold well; old pennies in particular selling for quite remarkable prices. Bandit spares probably didn't do quite so well this time, although we have had a huge number on offer over recent years, so I suppose there is a limit to how many bandit parts people need.

So all in all, a great day, certainly one of our best. Many thanks for all the emails, letters and phone calls I've received – it's always good to know our efforts are appreciated, and thank you all for making it the success that it was. As always, a big thank you to the crew: Kevin and Steve, our auctioneers; Kevin, our chief of security; Doff, our chief accountant; the lads who helped with the portering throughout the day, and to everyone who offered assistance in whatever way they could.

We'll see you all next year, on Sunday 30th November.

Jerry



Here are some of the prices realised in this year's auction. As usual, the full list can be viewed in the **Area** on the pennymachines site.

Lot	Description	Price
17	R&W Fill 'em Up allwin, in good condition.	500
18	Jamiesons Rotolite electro-mechanical wall machine.	310
21	Bryans Bullion, in good condition.	650
47	Parkers Carousel allwin in oak case, on old penny play.	550
50	Wonders Drop a Copper wall machine, on 1d play.	225
74	Sega Monaco one-armed bandit, in good condition.	260
76	Rare Jennings Superior Chief one-armed bandit, with jackpot.	825
91	Lucky Bells electro-mechanical wall machine.	140
97	1930s oak-cased drop coin wall machine.	240
98	Parkers Carousel allwin, in art-deco style case.	710
100	Early 19 cup allwin, with automatic payout.	700
101	Early Clown allwin, with token payout.	850
122	Gottlieb strength tester, on 1 cent play.	190
129	Mini Sega, on 6d play. Good working order, with keys.	200
130	5 vintage arcade signs, double sided.	180
131	5 vintage arcade signs, double sided.	150
132	Vintage arcade advertising sign, painted by Gary Bignall.	230
140	Extremely rare Victorian longcase bagatelle wall machine.	700
143	1959 Gunter Wulf Duo Mat wall machine..	450
148	Oliver Whales Strike 'em allwin.	585
150	Jamiesons Easy Push counter-top pusher.	575
171	Rock-Ola Worlds Fair Jigsaw pintable, in good condition.	600
175	Bell Fruit Cascade wall machine, in good condition, on 1p play.	310
176	Electricity is Life, American electric shock machine.	280
177	French wall machine, c.1930s.	350
200	Mills Hi-Top one-armed bandit, on old penny play.	240
202	Jennings Galaxy one-armed bandit, working on old 5p.	250
229	Bryans Eleveses allwin.	440
230	Early Bryans Payramid on old penny play.	1325
233	Very rare Myers double Tele-Test counter-top fortune teller.	525
234	Wonders Honest Joe giant allwin, on old penny play.	900
235	Rare Cromptons Beachcomber wall machine, with key.	350
237	1933 Rock-Ola Wings pintable.	140
238	Very rare 1920/30s French pintable.	280

Slotties Cometh

A Coventry ode by Angie Dobney

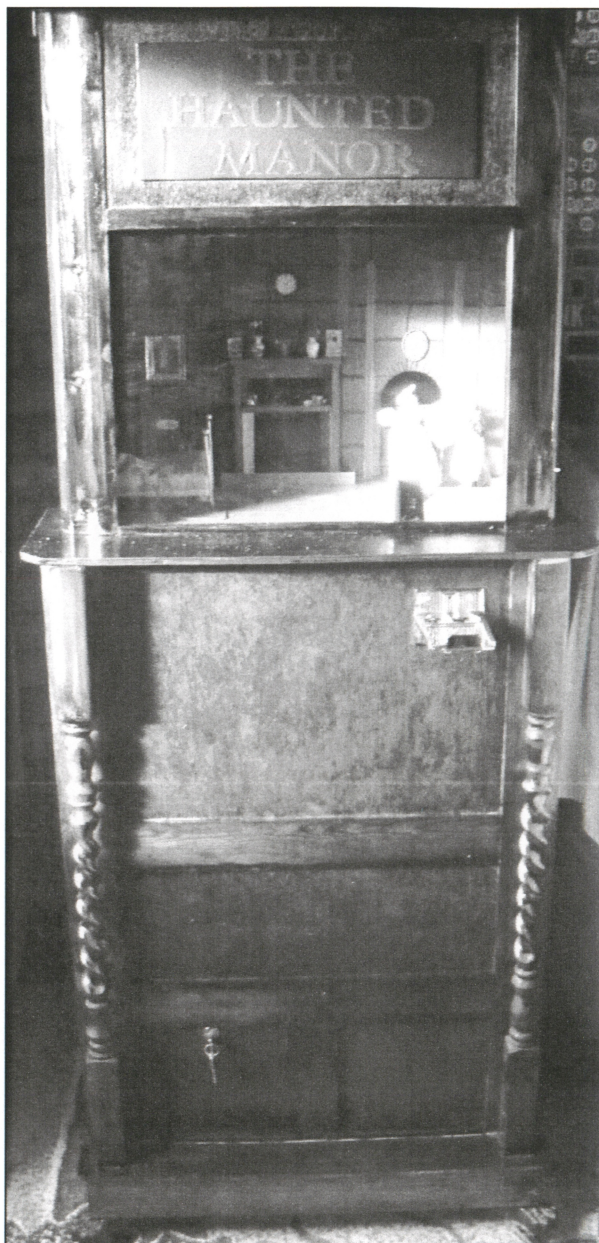
*There's no place you can hide, when they come from far and wide.
Car loads in their hoards, so determined, you could applaud.
Some are there to sell, others come to buy.
Many are alone, partners wave them off with a heavy sigh.*

*What will they bring home, will it even fit in.
What will the neighbours say, is it fit for the bin?
Every year it happens, just can't keep away.
Like a drug it pulls them, sitting there all day.*

*The air is filled with chatter until the loan voice starts to speak.
You couldn't here a pin drop or a floorboard creak.
He holds all their attention, just can't get it wrong.
Don't go putting your hand up if you don't think it will belong.*

*The tension is mounting, the sweat upon his brow.
Don't want to give in and loose it now.
Just a little more, have I got enough.
Whatever will she say when I arrive home with more stuff.*

*Then it's nearly over, all done for another year.
Goodbyes said, numbers exchanged, see you again never fear.
Next year it'll be the same, only place to be.
Gotta get my machines ready for next year's Coventry!*



The Haunted Manor

By Tim Froome

Looking back, I remember clearly my childhood times with my father and me walking past the amusement shop at the bottom of Chatham Hill, near where we lived. It was here that I used to live in a dream world of owning one of the lovely 6d Sega machines displayed in the window. This was way back in the late 60s.

I remember when I was 12 years old making a pinball table out of wood that paid out black jacks, a common sweet of the 60s. My woodwork and mechanical skills were buzzing when I was young. At the age of 14 years I made my first one arm bandit out of scrap, and I clearly remember my sister's boyfriend trying to fiddle the payout. Being made of hardboard case with a door knob that you turned to receive your money prize, it did not take a lot of brains to find a way of getting it to pay out, as the reels were not covered by glass!

Things changed when my father passed away and my mother and I moved to Hastings. I was steered into car mechanics, which I really hated; it was something I really did not want to do. However, time went by and within four years I was working at Hastings pier learning about slot machines, unjamming them and the normal things in an arcade. My electro-mechanical skills increased, and with added woodworking skills and cabinet making, what more could I want?

Unfortunately, this was all about to change in the 70s as the electronic age came to light. I worked with it for a while but sadly left it all behind and changed my job and my way of life changed. It was not until the mid 80s that I ventured into vending machines, purely by chance, and used what skills I had to stay with the company for several years before changing to the world of retail.

It was six months ago when the venture turned to the building of antique amusement machines. Now you're talking! My electro-mechanical and cabinet making skills unleashed to the full. Brilliant stuff - showing not only myself, but also collectors what I can do. My main aims being my own designs of replica amusement machines from the late 1800s to the 1960s.

First machines just have to be the early 1900s fortune telling and the miniature scenes machines such as Haunted Graveyard, The Guillotine, Laughing Sailor, The Hangman and many more. These machines can be gold dust to find for the collector and some reaching thousands of pounds. So the idea of a replica is appealing. Also lots of future tabletop machines included of my own design. I just dribble at the thought of making all my dreams come true, and with the help of my dear supporting partner they are coming true. Good thing is she loves the old machines too and that means a lot to me.

Well less of the waffling and let's tell you about my latest machine; it's called The Haunted Manor. A few of these machines were made at the turn of the century around 1906 in America. Works set out on designing the cabinet with its metal claw feet. The cabinet stands around 5ft 8" by 2 foot square, and is made from the best woods: oak, marine ply and birch, polished in dark oak.

The coin mechanism is push mechanical. The original is meant to take one cent, but I have set this one at 30 pence. The annoying thing is, since making this machine, good old British mint has made the 10 pence coin thicker. As the Essex slide-mech takes 20p plus one 10p, it is causing some issues as it accepts the older 10p but not the newer, not forgetting they're magnetic now as well (cheaper metal to produce).

The mechanical part of the machine is quiet complicated and some electro-mechanics had to be changed such as the cam side but saying this there are no electronics at all just a couple of relays. The dolls are handmade and so is the scenery, trying to get as near to the original as possible. Listed below is the run-down of what happens when the coins are inserted.

A light in the front glass of the machine illuminates until a coin is inserted. All is quiet for a few seconds, then a trap door lifts to reveal a skeleton; this comes with that old solenoid sound of a buzz and snap, followed by the bedside lamp illuminating! The bedside lamp then goes out followed by the fireplace lifting up, behind the fireplace is a secret room. A light then comes on in the secret room to reveal an horrific scene (well in those times it was horrific) - rather looks like Sweeney Todd having a go at some poor



man in a chair. Spooky stuff! The light goes out and the fire place closes, then in the silent room behind poor Willie Winkle, a female spooky ghost appears in the hall way (a mirror image that was used a lot in the early machines). The machine comes to a halt and the insert coin light comes back on. A 45 second scene with a nice bit of cam work.

It is a lovely machine and looks the antique machine of its time. I'll be sorry to see this one go but must make some more; I just love it. I have a fortune question and answer machine under construction now, which is not such an old machine. This one pays out a scroll telling your answer to the question and a little bit of advice. It's a great eye catcher.

Future machines in the pipeline are American Execution (Electric Chair) horrific in its time (1903s) and the Spiritualist Room, from the 1950s. I do all this round fixing and restoring service for existing customers. If all goes well I have been in touch with Dreamland and am hoping to have few of the Victorian machines in there. Finally my dream is coming true and those old mechanical machines run again.

Tim Froome



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Barry (mid Essex)

hisbar.hisbar@gmail.com

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could let me have a look at one or supply
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Alan 01582 536356

alannjo1@virginmedia.com.

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Pete 01493 369938 (Norfolk)

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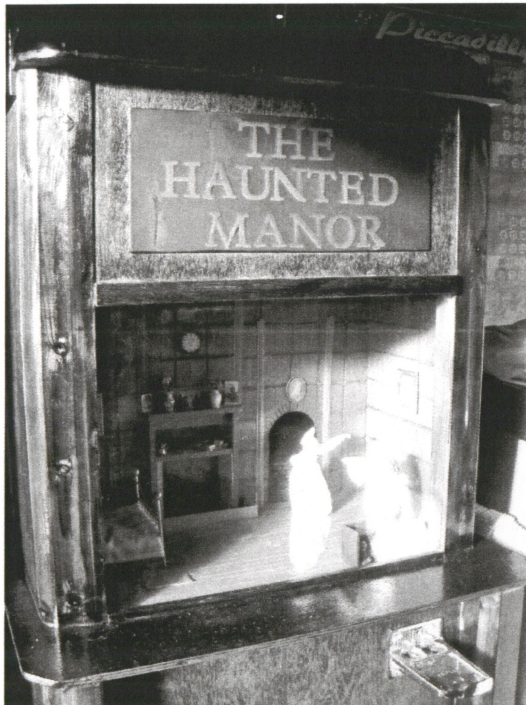
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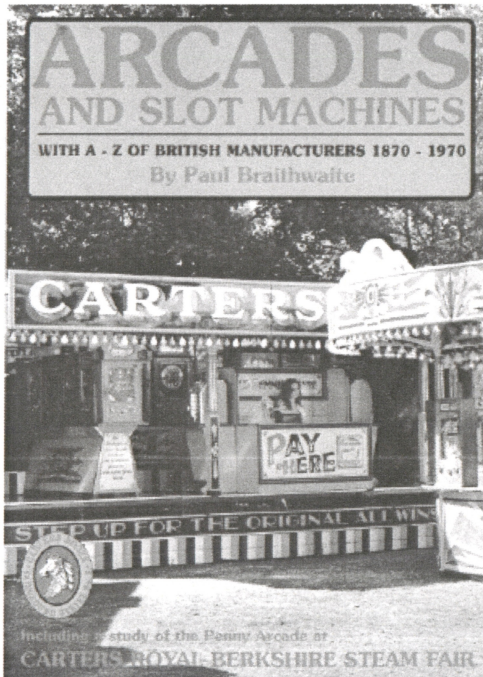
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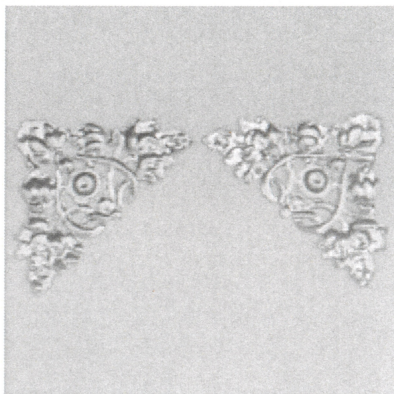
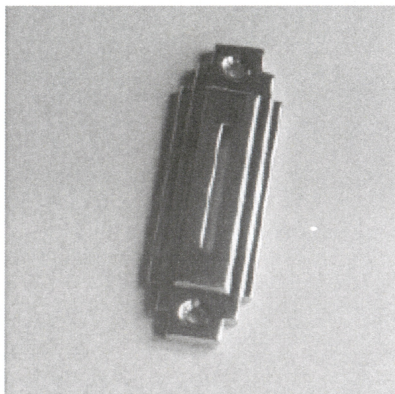
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